

Kootenai County, Idaho
The Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests has announced availability of the Bottom Canyon Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Decision Notice (DN). The 11,000-acre Bottom Canyon Project Area is located approximately 10 miles northeast of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, entirely within Kootenai County (the legal location is T51N R2W, sections 1-3, 10-12, 13-16, 21-26; T51N R1W sections 6-9, 17-20 and 30; T52N R2W sections 35-36; and T52N R1W section 31, Boise Meridian). The Bottom Canyon Project was proposed in response to findings of the 2012 Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) Integrated Vegetation and Fuels 5-Year Action Plan, a collaborative effort to identify priority areas of the IPNF based on wildland urban interface, restoration potential, forest health, and/or timber suitability. Lands in the Bottom Canyon Project Area are among those designated in May 2014 by Department of Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to address insect and disease threats that weaken forests and increase the risk of forest fire. The Governor of Idaho has asked that priority be given to project development within these designated insect and disease areas.

The 2014 Farm Bill (Section 8204) amended Title VI of the 2003 Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA; 16 U.S.C. 6591) by adding section 602 (Designation of Treatment Areas) and section 603 (Administrative Review) to address qualifying insect and disease infestations on National Forest System lands. The HFRA provides for focused environmental analysis, pre-decisional objection review, and guidance on judicial review. The Bottom Canyon Project meets requirements to be carried out in accordance with Title VI, section 602 (d) of the HFRA.

The Draft DN provides the rationale for selecting Alternative 3 for implementation in the Bottom Canyon Project Area. Developed in response to public concerns, the Selected Alternative will implement vegetation management activities on a total of approximately 2,272 acres, including timber harvest, fuels treatment, and reforestation (tree planting) as well as early stand-tending activities (precommercial thinning, weeding and release). Road management activities associated with vegetation management include construction of 3.4 miles of permanent roads, construction of 2.0 miles of temporary roads, reconstruction of 8.5 miles of road followed by decommissioning after project completion, reconstruction of 15 miles of road followed by storage after project completion, and reconstruction of 4.9 miles of road followed by restoration to OHV trail standards after project completion.

A key aspect of the Selected

Alternative is the watershed restoration associated with rerouting a 1.3-mile segment of Road 206 out of the Burnt Cabin Creek floodplain, including road decommissioning, stream channel restoration, and floodplain connectivity activities. Alternative 3 also includes relocation of a portion of Trail 69 to reduce sedimentation and improve public safety. Watershed restoration activities will include decommissioning of 81 miles of road already closed to public motorized use, decommissioning of 1.3 miles of roads currently open to public motorized use (the represents the decommissioning of the segment of Road 206 in the floodplain), and 1.5 miles of road construction/reconstruction that will be open to public motorized use (associated with the Road 206 reroute).

This project is subject to review and objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and C. Objections will be accepted only from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the project during scoping or other opportunity for public comment (36 CFR 218.5(a)). A written objection must be submitted to the reviewing officer within 30 calendar days following publication of this legal notice of the objection period in the Coeur d'Alene Press. The publication date of this legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection (36 CFR 218.9(a)). Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

The objection must contain the minimum content requirements specified in §218.8(d), including the following information:

- The objector's name and address, with a telephone number or email address, if available;
- A signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for Email may be filed with the objection);
- When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector as defined in 36 CFR 218.2 (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request);
- The name of the project being objected to, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name of the national forest and ranger district on which the project will be implemented;
- A description of those aspects of the project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the project and, if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; and supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider;

A statement that demonstrates the connection between prior specific written comments on the particular project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunity for formal comment.

Incomplete responses to these requirements make review of an objection difficult and are conditions under which the reviewing officer may set aside an objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218.10.

Incorporation of documents by reference will not be allowed in the objection (36 CFR 218.7(c)).

Objections may be submitted to the Reviewing Officer by mail at: USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807; by fax at (406) 329-3411; or by e-mail at appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. The acceptable formats for submitting an electronic objection are: MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. Please type "Bottom Canyon Project Objection" in the e-mail subject line. Hand-delivered objections will be accepted at the Regional Forester's Office, 200 E. Broadway, Missoula, MT, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. All objections will be open to public inspection during the objection process (36 CFR 218.7(a)).

The Responsible Official for this proposal is Forest Supervisor Mary Farnsworth (3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815; telephone 208-765-7223). Copies of the EA and Draft DN are available on the IPNF web site (<http://www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage/nepa>; click on Land & Resources Management Projects); printed copies or copies on compact disk will be provided upon request. For more information regarding the proposal, please contact Project Leader Kerry Arneson (208-664-2318) or District Ranger Chad Hudson (208-769-3001).
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